United Nations A/71/789–S/2017/117

General Assembly
Security Council

Distr.: General
10 February 2017

Original: English

General Assembly
Seventy-first session
Agenda item 32
Protracted conflicts in the GUAM area and their implications for international peace, security and development

Security Council
Seventy-second year

Identical letters dated 8 February 2017 from the Permanent Representative of Georgia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to transmit herewith the statements of the President of Georgia, Prime Minister of Georgia and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia on the decision to hold a referendum in the Tskhinvali region/South Ossetia, Georgia, on 9 April 2017.

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex issued as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 32, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Kaha **Imnadze**
Permanent Representative

17-02102 (E) 150217

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Annex to the identical letters dated 8 February 2017 from the Permanent Representative of Georgia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

Statement of the President of Georgia on the holding of a so-called plebiscite and presidential elections in the Tskhinvali region on 9 April

The plebiscite, election or any other action that envisages the free expression of the will of citizens cannot be implemented in the territory occupied by the foreign State where the majority of the indigenous population was expelled from as a result of ethnic cleansing and where the only force exercising effective control today is the Russian Federation.

Any attempt to change the name of the occupied region, without the consent of the central Government of Georgia, represents yet another action against the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Georgia directed towards the further annexation of Georgia's occupied territories.

We again call upon the Russian Federation to take real steps towards the deoccupation of Georgia's occupied territories and the implementation of its international obligations.

We appeal to the international community to stand up to the violation of Georgia's sovereignty and territorial integrity and any attempt to legitimize the outcomes of so-called elections and a plebiscite.

Statement of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia on the decision to hold a referendum in the Tskhinvali region

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia condemns the decision of the Russian occupation regime to hold a referendum on changing the name of the Tskhinvali region/South Ossetia, Georgia, on 9 April 2017.

The Russian occupation forces intend to name one of the oldest regions of Georgia as "the republic of South Ossetia — the state of Alania", similar to the Republic of North Ossetia — Alania, in order to lay the groundwork for the illegal annexation of the occupied region. As early as 2008, after the military intervention in the Georgian territory, the Russian Federation recognized the so-called independence of the Tskhinvali region, in violation of the fundamental norms of international law, whereupon it pursues the factual annexation of the occupied territory. By naming Georgia's occupied region after the subject of the Russian Federation, Moscow is starting to use its remaining instruments against Georgian statehood.

Holding a referendum in the occupied territories of Georgia, while the ethnic Georgian population has fled as a result of ethnic cleansing and the occupying Power fully controls the situation on the ground, is illegal and cannot have any legal effect, irrespective of the outcomes. This is yet another act of aggression by the Russian Federation, fully neglecting the fundamental principles of territorial integrity and the inviolability of the internationally recognized borders of a sovereign State and is aimed at undermining the established international order.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia appeals to the international community to demonstrate a consistent and firm stance towards the illegal actions of the Russian Federation, take the appropriate measures to avoid the escalation of the situation in the Tskhinvali region and to prevent another fact of illegal annexation in Europe.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs also calls upon the Russian Federation to cease its provocative policy towards Georgia, respect the fundamental principles of international law and to withdraw its military forces from the territory of Georgia in accordance with the commitments under the Ceasefire Agreement of 12 August 2008.

Statement of the Prime Minister of Georgia on the holding of a referendum in the Tskhinvali region

In response to Georgia's peaceful policy and efforts seeking reconciliation and confidence-building between the populations divided by the occupation lines, the Russian Federation, unfortunately, continues to take steps towards the increased isolation and annexation of Georgia's occupied territories.

This is evidenced by the recent decision to hold a referendum on naming the Tskhinvali region similar to a subject of the Russian Federation, which once again exposes the true intentions of the occupying Power to incorporate Georgia's integral regions.

According to international law, it is unlawful and unacceptable to hold a referendum in a region from which tens of thousands of residents have been expelled as a result of ethnic cleansing and where effective control is exercised by the occupying Power.

I urge the international community to join forces and stand up to the Russian Federation's provocative actions in order to prevent violations of the territorial integrity of sovereign States and the imposition of the practice of unlawful annexation, which undermine the region's stability and the international system stemming from democratic values.

United Nations A/71/790

General Assembly

Distr.: General
13 February 2017
English
Original: Russian

Seventy-first session
Agenda items 31 and 108

Prevention of armed conflict

Measures to eliminate international terrorism

Letter dated 6 February 2017 from the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit herewith the text of a statement by the State Duma of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation, dated 20 January 2017, to the parliaments of the European States, the European Parliament, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (see annex).

I should be grateful if the present letter and its annex could be circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda items 31 and 108.

(*Signed*) V. **Churkin**

17-02201 (E) 140217 200217

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Annex to the letter dated 6 February 2017 from the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Statement by the State Duma to the parliaments of the European States, the European Parliament, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe

From 16 to 20 January 2017, an exhibition of photographs by journalists depicting events occurring over the last two years in the Syrian Arab Republic was held at the State Duma of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation. On display was an extraordinary collection of works of rare emotional power.

Many of the 52 photographs in the exhibition had not previously been available for public viewing. Taken in the long-suffering Syrian Arab Republic by war correspondents risking their lives, these images serve as documentary evidence of the bloody tragedy that the Syrian people are now enduring as they struggle against the terrorists of Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant and the Nusrah Front, organizations banned in the Russian Federation and numerous other countries. These photographs bear eloquent testimony to the brotherhood in arms of the Russian and Syrian forces as they carry out their military duty, cooperating closely on behalf of peace, tranquillity and the total elimination of the terrorist threat on Syrian soil. Photojournalists recorded the liberation of the cities of Aleppo and Palmyra from terrorists; the daily routine in the military, including at the Humaymim Base, where the aviation unit of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation is located; and the day-to-day life of civilians suffering from terrorist attacks, hunger and a lack of medicine. Hope for a speedy end to the fighting in Syria is visible in the eyes of children going to a school that has been restored, and in the eyes of women and elderly people receiving humanitarian aid from members of the Russian military, who are risking their lives to defeat humanity's most ruthless enemy — international terrorism and its facilitators

The deputies of the State Duma call upon the parliaments of the European States, the European Parliament, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe to host the exhibition on their premises, thus making it accessible to parliamentarians. The deputies of the State Duma hope that this initiative will enjoy the support of all those who genuinely cherish freedom of speech and the right to information and who are not merely advocating for a speedy end to the conflict in and around the Syrian Arab Republic, but acting to achieve it.

V. V. **Volodin**
President of the State Duma
of the Federal Assembly
of the Russian Federation

Moscow, 20 January 2017

United Nations A/71/791–S/2017/132

General Assembly
Security Council

Distr.: General
17 February 2017

Original: English

General Assembly
Seventy-first session
Agenda item 41
Question of Cyprus

Security Council
Seventy-second year

Letter dated 10 February 2017 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Turkey to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit herewith a letter dated 8 February 2017, addressed to you by Mehmet Dânâ, Representative of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (see annex).

I would be grateful if the present letter and its annex could be circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 41, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Güven **Begeç**
Deputy Permanent Representative
Chargé d'affaires a.i.

17-02632 (E) 210217

Please recycle

Annex to the letter dated 10 February 2017 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Turkey to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Upon instructions from my Government, I am writing in response to the letter dated 25 January 2017 addressed to you by the Greek Cypriot representative in New York and circulated as a document of the General Assembly and of the Security Council (A/71/766-S/2017/74), which yet again contains false assertions similar to those made in his previous letters. In order to set the record straight, I would like to bring the following to your kind attention.

At the outset, regarding the claims of so-called "infringements of international air traffic regulations" and "violations of the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus by Turkey", I wish, once again, to reiterate that flights within the sovereign airspace of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus take place with the full knowledge and consent of the relevant authorities of the State, over which the Greek Cypriot administration in South Cyprus has no jurisdiction or right of say whatsoever. The civil aviation authority of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus is the sole competent authority to provide air traffic and aeronautical information services within its own national airspace. As for the false assertion regarding "illegally issued" Notices to Airmen, it must be underlined that activities within the Ercan advisory airspace that require Notices to Airmen are carried out by the relevant authorities of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus in accordance with article 3 of the Convention on International Civil Aviation (Chicago Convention).

Similarly, the claim in the letter regarding the Turkish Cypriot ports is also baseless, given the fact that the Greek Cypriot administration has no jurisdiction or right of say over Northern Cyprus. Furthermore, this claim ignores the present realities on the ground, namely, the existence of two independent self-governing States on the island of Cyprus, each exercising sovereignty and jurisdiction within its respective territory.

As to the repeated false allegations regarding Ercan Airport in the North, it should once again be underlined that the technologically up-to-date Ercan area control centre and airport in North Cyprus have been providing regular, reliable and safe air traffic services since the Greek Cypriot refusal in 1977 to provide air traffic services in the northern part of the island, in line with its isolation policy that has been imposed on the Turkish Cypriot people. Ever since, all flights within the sovereign airspace of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus have taken place with the full knowledge and permission of the Civil Aviation Department of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, over which the Greek Cypriot administration in South Cyprus has no jurisdiction or control. Furthermore, I would like to stress that the allegation regarding the interference of radio frequencies is also totally baseless.

Moreover, the isolation imposed on the Turkish Cypriots, which the Greek Cypriot side attempts to perpetuate by encouraging the international community to deem all air- and seaports in Northern Cyprus "illegal", is in complete contravention of international law, as well as the call made by the then Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, in his report to the Security Council dated 28 May 2004 (S/2004/437), in which he clearly states, "I would hope they [members of the Security Council] can give a strong lead to all States to cooperate both bilaterally and in international

bodies to eliminate unnecessary restrictions and barriers that have the effect of isolating the Turkish Cypriots and impeding their development, deeming such a move as consistent with Security Council resolutions 541 (1983) and 550 (1984)".

The legislation of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus on aeronautical safety meets all standards and recommendations of the International Civil Aviation Organization, providing safe and swift navigation of aircraft landing at or taking off from Ercan Airport and using airspace of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus. All airports in Northern Cyprus are in full conformity with international standards, and necessary investments have been made to keep up with the developing technology. The number of air traffic controllers has been increased in accordance with the increasing number of flights over the years, and the Ercan area control centre is in regular and close cooperation with the Ankara area control centre in order to ensure the safe conduct of all flights in the region. In 2016 alone, the number of passengers who used Ercan Airport stood at 3,628,887, while this number is expected to be around 3,900,000 in 2017. Moreover, in 2016, 27,109 planes used Ercan Airport for arrival and departure and 210,789 planes used the Ercan advisory airspace, and these numbers are expected to be around 28,080 and 225,000, respectively, in 2017. In that regard, it must also be stressed that the Turkish Cypriot side is committed to upholding the highest standards in the field of air navigation safety in full conformity with the Chicago Convention of 1944, and that it is ready to cooperate with the Greek Cypriot authorities on this very important issue.

At a time when the comprehensive settlement negotiations are at a critical stage, I deem it necessary to stress the need to fully channel all our efforts towards achieving a just and lasting settlement of the Cyprus conflict in line with the established United Nations parameters and the Joint Declaration of 11 February 2014, which envisage a new partnership on the basis of the political equality of the two peoples of the island within the framework of a bizonal, bicommunal federation with two constituent States of equal status. Moreover, the Greek Cypriot administration should once again be reminded that its counterpart is, and has always been, the Turkish Cypriot side, not Turkey.

Availing myself of the present opportunity, I would like to call upon the Greek Cypriot side to discontinue such counterproductive and outdated rhetoric, which is not reflective of the joint vision and cooperation expressed by the leaders of both communities on the island since the resumption of the settlement talks in May 2015. As the two future partners in the island of Cyprus, we should never lose sight of the fact that the solution of the Cyprus problem will comprehensively deal with all pending issues between the two sides and thus focus all our efforts towards the ultimate goal of settlement.

Finally, I would like to reiterate that, as the Turkish Cypriot side, we are committed to maintaining our constructive and positive stance for a results-oriented negotiating process within the context of your good offices mission in Cyprus and encourage our Greek Cypriot neighbours to follow a similar path.

I should be grateful if the present letter could be circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 41, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Mehmet **Dânâ**
Representative
Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus

United Nations A/71/792

General Assembly

Distr.: General
14 February 2017

Original: English

Seventy-first session
Agenda item 110
Report of the Secretary-General on the Peacebuilding Fund

The Peacebuilding Fund

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report covers the period from 1 January to 31 December 2016, during which the Peacebuilding Fund allocated $70.9 million to 17 countries. The year was marked by an overall improvement in programmatic results, demonstrating that three years of dedicated Fund support to country partners during project design, monitoring and evaluation, including a near fivefold increase in evaluations and a sixfold increase in support missions, had been a sound investment. Among its achievements and historic firsts, the Fund exceeded the United Nations-wide commitment to allocate at least 15 per cent of resources to women's empowerment, expanded its unique role in financing cross-border and regional peacebuilding initiatives, and launched the first United Nations dedicated funding stream in support of Security Council resolution 2250 (2015) on youth, peace and security. Against these achievements and despite expressions of support from a wide range of Member States, including $152.5 million raised during a September 2016 pledging conference, the Fund's financial health remains in question at a time when the demand for its assistance has reached historic highs. Options for securing adequate, sustainable financing for peacebuilding will be outlined in my upcoming report on sustaining peace in 2017.

17-01784 (E) 210217

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I. Introduction

1. The present annual report, covering the period from 1 January to 31 December 2016, is the seventh report submitted to the General Assembly pursuant to Assembly resolution 63/282. It covers the third and final year of the Business Plan 2014-2016 of the Peacebuilding Fund. This report will be complemented by a financial report issued by the Multi-Partner Trust Fund Office no later than 1 May 2017. Additional information can be found at http://www.unpbf.org, and complete information on individual projects can be found on the Multi-Partner Trust Fund Office Gateway (http://mptf.undp.org).

II. Global performance and lessons learned

2. The year 2016 heralded the historic adoption by the General Assembly and the Security Council of concurrent resolutions on the review of the United Nations peacebuilding architecture (see A/69/968-S/2015/490), the most comprehensive and far-reaching resolutions on peacebuilding to date. The emphasis of Assembly resolution 70/262 and Council resolution 2282 (2016) on the centrality of sustaining peace, which encompasses the imperative of conflict prevention, the need to address all stages of the conflict cycle, the importance of breaking silos, both at Headquarters and in the field, and the need to ensure national ownership and inclusivity, has important implications for the strategic priorities of the Peacebuilding Fund. In those resolutions, the Assembly and the Council welcomed the valuable work undertaken by the Fund as a catalytic, rapid-response and flexible pooled fund and recognized the need for United Nations peacebuilding efforts to have adequate, predictable and sustained financing.

3. With a view to replenishing the Peacebuilding Fund, a ministerial-level pledging conference was organized on the margins of the seventy-first session of the General Assembly in September 2016. The conference, co-hosted by the Governments of Kenya, the Netherlands, Mexico, the Republic of Korea, Somalia, Sri Lanka, Sweden and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, received strong political support from 32 ministers for foreign affairs who backed the Fund's approach and its contribution to sustaining peace. Notwithstanding this significant endorsement, the resulting $152.5 million in pledges fell short of the $300 million goal, the minimum amount needed to sustain operations for three years. As highlighted by the Deputy Secretary-General at the closing, the conference signified not the end but the beginning of efforts to secure adequate, predictable resources for the Fund. Such efforts include options for funding United Nations peacebuilding which will be outlined in my forthcoming report, mandated by the aforementioned resolutions, on sustaining peace.

4. During 2016, the Peacebuilding Support Office continued to warn that without predictable financing, it would not be able to sustain current levels of support, let alone meet growing demands. The Peacebuilding Fund allocated $70,956,966 million to 17 countries in 2016 (see table 1 on the Fund's active portfolio). By contrast, it received $57,760,692 million in contributions. The conference and multiple reviews and external evaluations of the Fund have recognized the singular role it plays in ensuring strategic coherence and funding politically risky yet

necessary endeavours. Such recognition will soon need to translate into predictable and sustainable financing if the Fund is to remain a reliable partner of States and societies committed to sustaining peace.

5. Given the success of its December 2015 investment along the Kyrgyzstan-Tajikistan border, the Peacebuilding Fund refined this niche role in 2016, undertaking additional cross-border efforts along the Liberia-Côte d'Ivoire border and supporting the sustainable return of Somali refugees from Kenya to the Baidoa area of Somalia. Pursuant to the joint mission in the second quarter of 2016 of my Special Representative for West Africa and the Sahel, Mohammed Ibn Chambas, and the Peacebuilding Support Office, the Fund anticipates new initiatives to prevent violent extremism in the Sahel in 2017: one along the border of Burkina Faso, Mali and the Niger and the other between Cameroon and Chad. The Fund will also support regional dialogue in the Balkans, led by members of the Tripartite Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The Fund's ability to invest across borders fills an important gap in peacebuilding funding and will continue to be one of the Fund's priorities.

6. In 2016, the Peacebuilding Fund more effectively implemented its mandate for taking calculated risks. In May, it allocated $2 million to Somalia for strengthening local delivery of basic services, channelling funds through national systems, a first among donors. To enhance its ability to take such risks, the Fund adopted the use of performance-based tranches to both limit the Fund's financial exposure in risky settings and maximize its scarce resources. It has applied this practice by transferring only portions of its commitments of $13 million to the Somalia priority plan, $2.9 million to promote national reconciliation in Libya and $2.3 million to leverage funding for the work of the Myanmar Joint Ceasefire Monitoring Committee. As the Fund contemplates new and continuing investments in 2017 in areas experiencing violence or political instability, such as Burundi, South Sudan and Yemen, it will turn increasingly to similar practices which encourage flexibility while minimizing exposure to risk.

7. Despite concerns over funding levels, the Peacebuilding Fund registered remarkable achievements in 2016. Previously, in 2015, it had for the first time met the target established in my Seven-Point Action Plan on Gender-Responsive Peacebuilding by allocating 15 per cent of resources to women's empowerment. In 2016, I am pleased to report that the Fund exceeded this target, allocating 20 per cent to women's empowerment. The Fund remains the only office within the United Nations Secretariat to have achieved this target. This important result was accomplished through a combination of measures, including further refinements in the methodology for calculating allocations and the launching of a third Gender Promotion Initiative. The Fund's next Business Plan will include clearer guidance on transparent budgeting for gender equality so as to ease future tracking of resources.

8. In addition to helping the Peacebuilding Fund surpass the 15 per cent target, the 2016 Gender Promotion Initiative, launched in tandem with the Fund's first-ever Youth Promotion Initiative, broke new ground on a number of other levels. It responded to recommendations in the 2015 review of the peacebuilding architecture to engage more closely with civil society by directly funding civil society organizations for the first time. The Gender and Youth Promotion Initiatives

together awarded $7.7 million to civil society organizations in eight countries. In addition, the Youth Promotion Initiative provided the first-ever United Nations funding stream dedicated to implementing Security Council resolution 2250 (2015) on youth, peace and security.

9. Central to the Peacebuilding Fund's success is the strength of its partnerships. Throughout 2016, the Fund and the Peacebuilding Commission continued to enhance their collaboration. Building on the results of previous informal sessions, on Somalia, Burkina Faso and the region of West Africa, the Commission held a discussion on peacebuilding results in Kyrgyzstan, where the Deputy Head of the Office of the President of Kyrgyzstan highlighted the critical support received from the Fund for the Government's peacebuilding strategy, as well as for a cross-border initiative with Tajikistan. Beyond specific country engagement, the Commission held a discussion on challenges in mobilizing sufficient and predictable funding for peacebuilding in anticipation of the high-level pledging conference, during which it called upon Member States to pledge generously. Finally, the Chair of the Fund's Advisory Group briefed the Commission on the Group's December meeting centred on taking stock of results achieved by the Fund in 2016. The Chair also presented an outline of the Fund's next Business Plan and once again raised concerns about the Fund's financial situation.

10. The support of the Peacebuilding Fund also deepened the partnership of the United Nations with the World Bank in 2016. The two organizations co-led the design of recovery and peacebuilding planning processes in the Central African Republic and Yemen, and participated in fragility and strategic assessment missions in Burkina Faso and the Central African Republic. In Somalia, risk management support financed by the Fund helped the United Nations, the World Bank and the African Development Bank design and implement a comprehensive risk management strategy common to all three trust funds under the Somalia New Deal compact.

11. The Peacebuilding Fund also continued to promote system-wide coherence and the use of common funding pools to maximize the impact of its investments. In Colombia and Myanmar, the Fund was the first to contribute to United Nations-led common funding mechanisms to leverage additional funds and enable country teams to coherently engage the international community for support. In Sri Lanka, through government leadership, the Fund's priority plan process was utilized to develop a much broader peacebuilding strategy, thus positioning the Fund's $7 million investment to leverage up to 10 times more funding. The Fund also utilized its support to drive cohesion in mission settings. Along the Côte d'Ivoire-Liberia border, the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) and the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI) have aligned their use of assessed contributions for programmatic funding with Fund investments. Moreover, the Fund worked closely with the Department of Political Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to support the deployment of peace and development advisers in non-mission settings as a means of ensuring that the Fund's investments are conflict-sensitive and guided by rigorous political analysis.

12. The Peacebuilding Fund continued to expand its partnership with regional actors and organizations and to promote regional approaches to peacebuilding. The

Peacebuilding Support Office began discussions on a standing memorandum of understanding with the African Union based on its ongoing partnership in Burundi, where it supported, together with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and UNDP, the work of African Union human rights observers.

13. The Peacebuilding Fund also benefited from its long-standing partnership with the African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes, which generously hosted the Fund's fourth global workshop in Durban, South Africa, in November 2016, bringing together representatives of national Governments, civil society organizations and United Nations country teams from eight countries, as well as representatives of the African Union and the World Bank. Bilateral donors, including Australia, Canada, Denmark, Sweden and the United States of America, also participated. The workshop, whose theme was "Investing in youth", provided an opportunity for frank discussion on challenges and opportunities with respect to engaging youth meaningfully and equitably in peacebuilding and on ways to take forward Security Council resolution 2250 (2015) on youth, peace and security.

14. During 2016 and in line with the emphasis in the aforementioned resolutions on sustaining peace throughout the conflict cycle, the Peacebuilding Fund continued to emphasize investments in violence prevention, de-escalation and stabilization. A $900,000 allocation to the Office of my Special Envoy for Yemen, for example, will help facilitate a Yemeni-led political settlement. Investments in the Niger and along the Kyrgyzstan-Tajikistan and Liberia-Côte d'Ivoire borders aim at supporting Governments in responding effectively to citizens' demands before frustrations or mistrust escalates into violence.

15. The outlook for 2017 remains hopeful, with a number of countries, including Guinea and Sierra Leone, graduating from traditionally larger Peacebuilding Fund engagement. Further, the anticipated transition of peacekeeping missions in Côte d'Ivoire, Haiti and Liberia will demand close partnership between missions and United Nations country teams, which the Fund is well positioned to support. As it enters its second decade, the Fund will continue to search for new and creative ways to improve the management of its scarce resources. In recognition of the increase in global needs and the renewed mandate provided by the General Assembly and the Security Council in their resolutions adopted in 2015, the Fund is doubly committed to improving and expanding its institutional partnerships, including with Interpeace, PeaceNexus and recipient United Nations organizations. However, its ability to answer the call put forward in those resolutions on peacebuilding and to fully implement its Business Plan remains contingent on its financial health.

Table 1
Peacebuilding Fund active portfolio including decisions taken in 2016

			2016 approvals	
		Cumulative transfers to date	*Immediate Response Facility*	*Peacebuilding and Recovery Facility*
	Date of approval of priority plan	*(United States dollars)*		
Peacebuilding Commission countries				
Burundi	February 2008, May 2011, February 2014	63 941 966	3 296 784	–
Central African Republic	June 2008, February 2010	56 190 765	267 500	–
Guinea	April 2009, December 2011, December 2013 (multiple)	61 634 854	1 000 000	–
Guinea-Bissau	June 2008, January 2011, October 2015	32 157 534	534 184	–
Liberia	February 2008, May 2011, October 2013	46 318 671	1 949 888	–
Sierra Leone	October 2008, December 2010	52 169 736	–	–
Subtotal		**312 413 526**	**7 048 356**	**–**
Countries not in the agenda of the Peacebuilding Commission				
Bosnia and Herzegovina		2 000 000	–	–
Colombia		2 000 000	3 000 000	–
Comoros	December 2008, May 2013	12 332 227	–	–
Côte d'Ivoire	July 2008, April 2014	33 727 750	3 500 000	–
Democratic Republic of the Congo	July 2009, June 2015	31 627 069	–	–
Guatemala	November 2010	13 331 723	10 406 919	–
Kenya[a]		1 500 000	500 000	–
Kyrgyzstan	September 2013	29 307 149	1 995 000	–
Libya		5 400 410	2 973 102	–
Madagascar	November 2015	7 007 180	–	–
Mali		13 432 177	3 975 146	–
Myanmar		10 080 846	3 243 641	–
Nepal	July 2008, May 2012	20 472 019	–	–
Niger	August 2015	13 099 650	–	–
Papua New Guinea	October 2014	9 090 836	–	–
Philippines		2 996 570	–	–
Solomon Islands		2 500 000	2 500 000	–
Somalia	June 2016	27 641 163	5 514 972	13 000 000
South Sudan	February 2013	14 521 947	–	–
Sri Lanka	August 2016	8 280 842	5 399 830	7 000 000

			2016 approvals	
		Cumulative transfers to date	Immediate Response Facility	Peacebuilding and Recovery Facility
	Date of approval of priority plan	(United States dollars)		
Tajikistan[a]		1 600 000	–	–
Yemen	March 2014	20 703 554	900 000	–
Subtotal		**282 653 112**	**43 908 610**	**20 000 000**
Total[b]		**602 144 994**	**50 956 966**	**20 000 000**

Source: Multi-Partner Trust Fund Office, January 2017.

Note: Table 1 reflects funding decisions that were taken in 2016, not funds transferred.

[a] As a counterpart to cross-border projects. Inclusion does not indicate the eligibility of Kenya or Tajikistan to access the Peacebuilding Fund.

[b] Includes countries with an active Peacebuilding Fund portfolio in 2016.

III. Country-specific engagements of the Peacebuilding Fund

A. Countries in the agenda of the Peacebuilding Commission

Burundi: supporting dialogue spaces and human rights during continued crisis

16. The situation in Burundi is characterized by continued political impasse, human rights violations, refugee flows into neighbouring countries and deterioration of the economic and humanitarian situation. Key in this context is access to verifiable information, which the Peacebuilding Fund supports through funding provided to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to undertake vital human rights monitoring and reporting. For the first time, the Fund also provided direct funding to a regional organization, i.e., through support to the deployment of 32 out of 100 authorized African Union human rights observers engaged in monitoring and documenting human rights violations in Bujumbura and other areas of the country.

17. The Peacebuilding Fund also continued to promote dialogue and conflict resolution capacities at the local level. A network of more than 500 women mediators have continued to address local conflicts and have brought together women of different political affiliations; urban youth were provided with targeted socioeconomic opportunities to improve social cohesion and community security; and children and youth in various provinces of Burundi were enabled to engage in peaceful conflict resolution and to develop cultural competence and tolerance through interactive theatre and psychosocial support.

18. The political context, however, has negatively affected implementation of the current peacebuilding priority plan. Notably, resources approved to support mediation efforts led by the East African Community could not be absorbed owing to a lack of commitment of various Burundian stakeholders to engage in an inclusive political dialogue. The United Nations country team and the Peacebuilding Fund secretariat continue to adapt to the context in order to provide flexible support, as evidenced by the broadening of partnerships, for example, with the African Union.

Central African Republic: support for recovery and peace consolidation

19. On 1 March 2016, the Constitutional Court proclaimed the final results of the presidential election held in the Central African Republic, confirming Faustin Archange Touadéra as President and putting an end to the country's two-year political transition. A Peacebuilding Fund-supported project provided assistance for the development of a code of good conduct, signed by political parties and presidential candidates in December 2015, which guided the generally peaceful electoral campaign.

20. After taking office, Mr. Touadéra confirmed his Government's determination to confront the root causes of the conflict, including through dialogue with armed groups. Despite these positive steps, the country continues to face peacebuilding challenges, exacerbated by limited state capacities.

21. In this context, a national plan for recovery and peace consolidation, which outlines needs and priorities for the coming five years, including peace and security and a renewed social contract, provided the basis for a November 2016 donors conference held in Brussels. At the conference, the Government and the international community signed a five-year strategic *Cadre d'engagement*, ensuring nationally led strategic engagement at the highest political level to implement the Government's key priorities and consolidate peace and stability.

22. The Peacebuilding Fund's ongoing projects are already aligned with both frameworks. In 2016, a community violence reduction initiative, implemented by the International Organization for Migration under the leadership of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic, provided temporary employment to approximately 2,000 ex-Séléka combatants and members of communities to which they returned. In addition, the Fund supported the restoration of public security and basic services, including the rehabilitation and equipping of administrative buildings, in the prefectures of Obo and Birao.

23. An important package of support from the Peacebuilding Fund for fighting impunity, reforming the security sector and promoting political dialogue will be rolled out in 2017, to help kick-start the implementation of the national plan and the *Cadre d'engagement*.

Guinea: consolidating achievements in strategic priority areas

24. Following prolonged talks, political parties agreed, on 12 October 2016, to hold long-overdue local elections in February 2017, to consolidate the gains of the relatively peaceful presidential elections.

25. The second phase of the second peacebuilding priority plan, which allocated more than $15 million, ended in 2016. Through the plan, Guinea has achieved progress in security sector reform, national reconciliation, democratization, provision of socioeconomic support to vulnerable youth including ex-associates of the armed forces, and institutionalization of local conflict resolution mechanisms.

26. Specifically, the Peacebuilding Fund supported holistic security sector reform, thereby contributing to changes in legal and policy frameworks, capacity development for security and defence forces and the harmonization of international

support. A framework for community policing has been created and 550 police officers have been trained in utilizing the new approach. The national police academy reopened after 15 years. The Fund's investments have also helped leverage further support from the European Union and the United States, totalling more than $17 million, as well as $7 million invested by the Government of Guinea in 2016.

27. While the overall impact of the Peacebuilding Fund's investment will be confirmed through a final independent evaluation in 2017, Guinea is set to become the first country to transition from the agenda of the Peacebuilding Commission, emitting a signal of strong confidence in the progress it has made through a decade of Fund and Peacebuilding Commission support.

Guinea-Bissau: supporting dialogue and national reconciliation

28. Guinea-Bissau continues to struggle with unstable institutions and a political stalemate, which affects the effective governing of the country and implementation of the priority plan. Through the plan, the Peacebuilding Fund has supported the good offices of my Special Representative and the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau (UNIOGBIS) in sustaining mediation efforts, currently led by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). These efforts have resulted in a the creation of a road map and the signing by all major political stakeholders of the Conakry Agreement on 14 October 2016. At the same time, the Mission has assisted the organizing committee of the national conference on the theme "Paths to peace and development" in achieving capacity development and has contributed to a more inclusive preparation of the national reconciliation process.

29. While a civil registration project which will provide the foundation for the access of vulnerable groups to social services and civic participation experienced a successful start in 2016, the implementation of a project aimed at contributing to the achievement of a more effective justice sector was hampered by the political impasse. The United Nations country team and the Mission continue to facilitate the development and implementation of projects designed to respond to challenges and remain flexible as regards programming within this difficult political environment.

Liberia: consolidating gains during mission drawdown

30. The year 2016 marked the end of all projects supported by the Peacebuilding Fund's $30 million two-phase investment in Liberia. The projects supported by those investments, launched in 2011, will be evaluated independently so as to capture the peacebuilding results achieved.

31. Through the two phases, the Peacebuilding Fund has supported the Liberian peacebuilding plan and reconciliation road map, through which justice and security investments have been paired with reconciliation mechanisms. Since 2011, the justice and security services have begun decentralizing through three justice and security hubs. Fund-supported county peace committees play a key role in mediating local-level conflicts, while the Palava Hut process supports dialogue and healing for conflict-related human rights violations. At community level, peace huts provide women with space for participation in local peacebuilding and addressing domestic violence. While some peace huts are self-sustaining through economic

empowerment initiatives, others still require additional investments to ensure their sustainability.

32. The Peacebuilding Fund approved a total of $3 million for the engagement of Liberia in a cross-border initiative with Côte d'Ivoire in 2017. The project, designed to build confidence among border security actors and communities, responds to calls from the Presidents of both countries for attention to border areas in anticipation of the drawdown of the peacekeeping missions. The project will be paired with programmatic funds from each mission's assessed contributions to ensure that communities along the border receive attention.

33. In 2016, the Peacebuilding Fund also approved its first direct contribution to a local non-governmental organization, Educare, in order to strengthen women's participation in the resolution of conflicts related to natural resources management.

34. Looking ahead, the Peacebuilding Fund will continue to provide support to Liberia, as it anticipates the completion of the engagement of United Nations peacekeeping and the presidential election.

Sierra Leone: strengthening human rights capacity and preventing electoral violence

35. The Peacebuilding Fund supported the deployment of a peace and development adviser and a human rights adviser and strengthened the capacities of the Human Rights Commission in 2016. The general elections scheduled for early 2018 will be the first to be held without the presence of a Security Council-mandated mission, which represents an important milestone in the country's democratic transition. The Fund will work closely with the United Nations country team and the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel (UNOWAS) to prevent or mitigate electoral violence, notably through youth engagement.

B. Other recipient countries

Bosnia and Herzegovina: youth find their voice through the dialogue platform

36. The Peacebuilding Fund's $2 million investment in the project "Dialogue for the future" wound down in 2016, having reached upward of 30 per cent of the population. Implemented by UNDP, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the project, which was supported by the three members of the Tripartite Presidency, sought to bolster social cohesion by providing space for citizens from all three constituent groups and others to interact and discuss peace- and trust-building priorities with each other and with decision makers. Through an independent evaluation, it was found that the project, with its strong youth angle, had helped reduce youth disaffection from an astonishing 97 per cent in 2012 to 87 per cent in 2016. The project also gave focus to intercultural education and triggered cooperation among university students in Banja Luka, Mostar and Sarajevo.

Colombia: assisting victims of decades-long conflict

37. The historic peace agreement between the Government of Colombia and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia-People's Army (FARC-EP), signed by the parties and ratified by the country's congress in November, has brought renewed hope for lasting peace. In August, the Peacebuilding Fund approved a project designed to support collective reparations to victims of the armed conflict. This project, implemented by UNDP and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), in close collaboration with the Government of Colombia, focuses on supporting victims in areas with a historic presence of FARC-EP, thereby helping to pave the way for a smooth implementation of the agreement and for building trust in the peace process. Support for this project was channelled, in February 2016, through the Multi-Donor Trust Fund of the United Nations for Post-Conflict in Colombia, to which the Fund was an early contributor. Since then, a total of more than $40 million in contributions has been mobilized for the implementation of the peace agreement.

Côte d'Ivoire: prevention through nationwide conflict mapping

38. The second priority plan for Côte d'Ivoire consolidates earlier peacebuilding gains by reinforcing state capacity to deliver services and foster social cohesion, and by reinforcing local-level conflict prevention and resolution mechanisms. With regard to the latter, real-time conflict mapping has allowed quick reaction and adjusted interventions, including a shift in focus to the north after an outbreak of violent conflict between farmers and cattle breeders. In addition, targeted support to local authorities led to the establishment of regional security committees. They facilitated regular dialogues between communities and security actors which led to an increased level of trust, thereby enabling the peaceful environment during the electoral period at the end of 2016.

39. CARE International, the first civil society recipient of support from the Peacebuilding Fund in Côte d'Ivoire, will work in the Liberian border region to reinforce the participation of women and youth in existing conflict resolution systems. The complementarity with the newly approved cross-border project means that the entire spectrum of inter- and non-governmental actors, as well as the Government, will be working together to foster social cohesion.

Democratic Republic of the Congo: supporting stabilization

40. Amid deadly protests and polarized debate over elections and the upholding of the constitution, particularly regarding presidential terms of office, the Government and the opposition reached an agreement on 31 December, whereby President Kabila will remain in power until elections are held by December 2017. In the interim, it is expected that a national council for overseeing the electoral agreement and process will be established and that a new prime minister will be named from the opposition.

41. Against this background, the security situation has continued to affect the population in the east of the country disproportionately. The Peacebuilding Fund has been supporting the stabilization efforts of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) since

2009, through funding under the International Security and Stabilization Support Strategy. Investments by the Fund cover the five pillars of the Strategy, including dialogue; security; restoration of state authority; return, reintegration and recovery; and sexual and gender-based violence. The projects, supported by provincial state authorities, have contributed to reduced intercommunal tensions. Specifically, more than 130,000 persons have benefited from peaceful conflict resolution and management through democratic dialogue processes. Support for the restoration of state authority, accompanied by income-generating activities, has consolidated initial gains in conflict transformation at the local level. Fund investments have brought tangible improvements on the ground, including the construction of a number of police and local government offices, and a legal clinic for victims of sexual violence. As a complement to infrastructure improvements, 130 police officers were trained and deployed and the capacities of judicial personnel were strengthened, which contributed to better performance by security actors throughout the sector. A total of 3,350 people (50 per cent of them women) benefited from socioeconomic activities, which resulted in a strengthening of the cohesion and resilience of communities and a raising of the voice of women in their family and community.

Guatemala: extending the fight against impunity

42. Throughout 2016, Guatemala continued to witness political and institutional changes, triggered in part by the pursuit of justice for current and past violations led by the Office of the Public Prosecutor, in coordination with the International Commission against Impunity in Guatemala. Specifically, 2016 saw a major breakthrough in transitional justice, with several perpetrators of gross human rights violations committed during the armed conflict brought to justice.

43. Amid these transformative changes, in an independent evaluation of the Guatemala peacebuilding priority plan 2011-2015, it was found that the plan had contributed significantly to the strengthening of justice and security institutions and helped increase citizens' trust.

44. Following the evaluation, it was recommended by a joint mission of the Fund and the Department of Political Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat that there be a second phase of funding so as to maintain the current momentum in the fight against impunity by means of renewed support to the strengthening of the rule of law, particularly transitional and criminal justice, through state institutions and civil society.

45. In response, in September 2016, the Peacebuilding Fund approved a project aimed at strengthening national capacities to fight impunity, focusing on the investigative capacities of the Office of the General Prosecutor with respect to cases involving illegal groups and clandestine organizations, and cases of femicide. A second phase of investment in Guatemala in the amount of $9 million, which includes a package of six projects addressing transitional justice, entailing, inter alia, support to indigenous women survivors of gender-based violence and the institutionalization of dialogue centred around social conflict, was approved in late 2016.

Kyrgyzstan: improved local-level relations bode well for the future

46. Kyrgyzstan's three-year priority plan, which had been supported by the Peacebuilding Fund through a $15.1 million investment, ended in 2016. The plan focused on three outcomes: (a) peace and reconciliation through strengthened policy and legal frameworks; (b) building capacity of local self-governing bodies to manage local conflicts and support social cohesion; and (c) provision of multilingual education to ensure that all citizens have access to economic and educational opportunities. The strong leadership provided by the Office of the President and the United Nations Resident Coordinator yielded results that, while still tentative, instil confidence in the direction of the path ahead.

47. Nationwide perception surveys reveal an increase in citizens' confidence in the capacities of local self-governing bodies to resolve conflicts, from 30 per cent at the outset of the plan in 2014 to 82 per cent at its conclusion. Citizens' perceptions reflect an actual decline in conflict in districts targeted by the priority plan, from 82 instances of violence in 2014 to only 10 in 2016. Positive momentum has triggered popular optimism, with 98 per cent of citizens perceiving an improvement in inter-ethnic relations.

48. These positive trends stem from concrete improvements in areas targeted by the priority plan, including an increase in female police officers from 0 to 7 per cent in the period from 2014 to 2016, despite an overall decline nationwide. Local self-governing authorities and citizens jointly identified and implemented more than 120 local infrastructure projects aimed at smoothing tensions over scarce natural resources; and multilingual education has reached more than 9,000 students, thereby helping to increase inter-ethnic understanding and raise life chances for historically marginalized groups.

49. The impressiveness of these achievements notwithstanding, new challenges have recently emerged, related particularly to recruitment carried out by religious extremist groups. Moving forward, the Peacebuilding Fund will identify opportunities for continuing its support to Kyrgyzstan and consolidating these gains.

Libya: supporting national reconciliation

50. The Peacebuilding Fund approved a $2.9 million project entitled "Towards national reconciliation in Libya" to assist Libyan national and local authorities, civil society and other partners in their effort to promote an inclusive national reconciliation vision, including the development of a framework for national reconciliation and provision of support to grass-roots initiatives. The project also aims at advancing the implementation of the December 2015 Libyan political agreement and enabling the United Nations to support efforts to broaden outreach and consensus around national reconciliation, a key pillar of Libya's political transition process. The project will be implemented through a collaboration between the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) and UNDP, together with non-governmental organizations.

Madagascar: learning from the past to inform future programming

51. Throughout 2016, Madagascar continued to face a number of peacebuilding challenges identified in the December 2015 peacebuilding priority plan, including

weak governance and accountability mechanisms, a security sector in need of reform, and serious disparities between the centre and the periphery and urban and rural communities.

52. In response, in August 2016, the Joint Steering Committee in Madagascar approved two initiatives to promote good governance and security sector reform under the $11.5 million priority plan. The first initiative supports the implementation of the Government's strategy to fight corruption, the protection of whistle-blowers and the establishment of an independent national commission on human rights. The second aims at strengthening trust between the population and security forces, particularly through professionalization and capacity-building of the security forces and improved weapons control.

53. Finally, to facilitate the development of a coordinated package of support for the southern part of the country, the Peacebuilding Fund commissioned an anthropological study to guide the identification of priorities and modalities of support, and to enable learning from past unsuccessful attempts to build peace and address historical marginalization. On the basis of this analysis, the Joint Steering Committee is expected to approve the support package for the south in early 2017.

Mali: sustaining the peace agreement

54. Despite challenges in implementing the peace agreement, Peacebuilding Fund projects in Gao and Timbuktu yielded a number of positive results. Approximately 4,000 children returned to school in 2016 and the Minister of National Education integrated peacebuilding into school curricula, catalysing additional funds from Japan to expand activities to Mopti. The reporting to the police of gender-based violence increased from 1 to 13.7 per cent in the period from 2014 to 2016, indicating the greater confidence of victims in the police and judicial system. A gender section was established within the Truth, Justice and Reconciliation Commission to respond to sexual violence in conflict. Despite these positive trends, Fund-sponsored community-monitoring surveys indicate that the effectiveness of traditional leaders in resolving community-based conflicts is declining and formal systems for conflict resolution are not yet in place. The surveys also reveal that lack of basic services and lack of employment opportunities in the north are among the main reasons why youth join armed groups.

55. Two cantonment sites, in Gao and Timbuktu, were constructed, employing local workers and improving the population's perception of the cantonment process. However, slowness in the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process delayed the planned cantonment of 2,250 combatants at the sites. The project was able to catalyse funds for the construction of five additional sites, and the World Bank pledged $26 million for reintegration programmes.

56. Through the Gender and Youth Promotion Initiatives, the Peacebuilding Fund approved $2.5 million for projects implemented by non-governmental organizations, the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINSUMA) and the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women).

Myanmar: modest progress amid continued tension

57. Most Peacebuilding Fund investments drew to a close in 2016, evidencing modest gains. Initiatives addressing access to basic services and improving social cohesion helped improve perceptions of the government in Mon and Kayin States, and fostered establishment of networks of youth which crossed ethnic and religious lines to cooperatively respond to tensions that had been building since 2015. Support to the Centre for Diversity and National Harmony enabled regular reporting and cross-communal cooperation in restive Rakhine State, which enabled provision of real-time analysis amid persisting tensions. While the numbers of grave human rights violations perpetrated against children were seen to have increased — largely as a result of better monitoring and reporting — 167 children formerly associated with armed forces were released and received assistance through a joint project of UNICEF, the International Labour Organization (ILO) and UNDP, and supported by the Fund, for reintegration into civilian life.

58. Through a new $2.3 million investment, the Peacebuilding Fund will support the establishment of a joint monitoring committee to monitor the national ceasefire agreement, based on a request from the National League for Democracy-led Government.

The Niger: supporting youth and women in conflict-prone areas

59. In 2016, the Niger faced the challenges posed by terrorist attacks and an electoral crisis involving the majority and opposition parties in the wake of presidential and legislative elections held in the second quarter of 2016. To stave off electoral violence, the Peacebuilding Fund priority plan supported the participation of youth and women in sociopolitical dialogue in Niamey and Zinder.

60. Aside from responding to emergent elections-related crises, the priority plan is designed to support the Government in preventing violent extremism through a comprehensive package which encompasses dialogue, conflict mitigation and other confidence-building measures. Through the priority plan, 781 youth have been integrated socioeconomically and women in Tahoua and Zinder have been empowered to prevent recruitment of youth by armed and terrorist groups. These efforts have been underpinned by a wider programme aimed at promoting the involvement of youth in decision-making, encompassing, inter alia, familiarization of 9,600 people, including women and youth in Tahoua, Zinder, Tillabery and Agadez, with the implications of Security Council resolution 2250 (2015); and training, conducted by traditional leaders, of 2,375 women and youth on the peaceful resolution of conflicts. The plan extends to border areas, supporting several initiatives involving security and defence forces and the population and whose goal is to build confidence.

61. Following positive initial results, the priority plan has already catalysed the provision of €5 million by Denmark to take forward initiatives begun through Peacebuilding Fund investments.

Papua New Guinea: setting the stage for a peaceful referendum

62. The Peacebuilding Fund continued to open channels for United Nations engagement in advance of the upcoming referendum on the political status of the

Autonomous Region of Bougainville, scheduled for June 2019. The Fund's allocation of more than $9 million follows priorities identified in the 2014 country context analysis, including enabling a conducive environment for a peaceful referendum through weapons disposal, reconciliation and community-level trauma healing and sustained civic awareness on the referendum.

63. With Peacebuilding Fund support, UNDP facilitated community-level discussions to ensure that peoples' voices would be heard in the pre-referendum period. In addition to information on how to participate, provision of psychosocial support to traumatized communities will help smooth the way towards their full engagement in community life as well as meaningful participation in discussions on the country's future. With UNICEF support, 35 trained counsellors have conducted outreach to targeted villages, while UN-Women hosted 120 community conversations with thousands of participants in more than 50 locations.

64. Through Peacebuilding Fund investments in women's empowerment, UN-Women supported the Autonomous Government of Bougainville in establishing the Office of Gender Equality, a significant milestone which will ensure the coordination of gender mainstreaming throughout the territory. UNDP also supported the establishment of a Parliamentary Committee on Gender in the Parliament of Bougainville. Also, in 2016, technical support provided by UN-Women helped in the ratification of the historic Bougainville Community Government Act, which mandates equal political representation of women and men in local elections and encourages women's political empowerment at community level.

Philippines: towards lasting peace in Mindanao

65. In 2016, amid renewed momentum for various peace processes, the Peacebuilding Fund supported a project aimed at generating acceptance of the Comprehensive Agreement on the Bangsamoro and the associated Basic Law. The project focused specifically on engaging women community leaders and youth, including the training of 134 women leaders and engagement of 588 youth in community-level dialogue through cultural projects. While the Basic Law was not passed by the congress, the project helped to systematically include the concerns of indigenous groups, women and youth in the development of the future Bangsamoro entity. In addition, it facilitated the establishment of a forum to enable the wider Moro leadership to develop common positions on the governance of Bangsamoro. Finally, Fund resources were used to provide economic opportunities — and therefore alternatives to violence — for conflict-affected youth.

Solomon Islands: supporting infrastructures for peace and reconciliation

66. Despite a fluid political environment, the Government of Solomon Islands prioritized reconciliation and unity during 2016, including the establishment of a steering committee for the drafting of a comprehensive framework for reparations. As the country faces an uncertain transition with the drawdown of the regional assistance mission in June 2017, the Peacebuilding Fund approved its first project in Solomon Islands, which will support a peaceful transition and help establish a foundation for peacebuilding work. The project, which began in mid-2016, supports inclusive dialogue and reconciliation; strengthening national capacity for the

implementation of a peace policy; and women's and youth's engagement in the peace process. The project has already assisted the Government in consulting with key provincial leaders and communities, supported the first national women's summit and provided opportunities to youth leaders and marginalized youth to engage with Government stakeholders on the elaboration of a forward-looking peacebuilding agenda.

Somalia: promoting the extension of authority for community recovery

67. The Federal Government of Somalia continued efforts in 2016 to enhance peace and stability throughout the country, with gains that remain significant but fragile. In order to sustain the important progress made, the Government will need to demonstrate its ability to deliver efficient, tangible results to the Somali population.

68. Within this context, the investments of the Peacebuilding Fund in Somalia focus on promoting the Federal Government's capacity to implement programmes within the framework of the New Deal compact, particularly in essential areas deemed too risky by other donors. A $2 million investment, approved in May 2016, to improve access to basic services in areas recently recovered from Al-Shabaab is the first investment to be implemented through Somali national systems, constituting an important test of their ability to bolster other donors' confidence in following suit. A subsequent $13 million investment, approved in June 2016, is also being implemented through national systems and kick-starts the new approach of the United Nations to assisting emerging federal States and supporting durable solutions for the increasing number of Somalis returning from Kenya, Yemen and beyond. This investment signalled the Fund's new performance-based management approach, entailing the transfer of $8 million towards a first phase of implementation, with a following through of the remainder after the performance benchmarks have been met.

69. These efforts complement earlier Peacebuilding Fund investments aimed at improving rule of law, risk analysis and women's empowerment, including the elaboration of Somalia's first national gender policy. In addition, the Fund supported a high-risk innovative project aimed at achievement of an understanding of what drives Somalis to join Al-Shabaab and of how to reduce the risk of radicalization in prison.

Sri Lanka: a window of opportunity for building lasting peace

70. In 2016, Sri Lanka continued to build on the commitment to peacebuilding that it had made after the political transition of January 2015. The Government took a number of steps to implement a broad-based peacebuilding agenda, including towards the establishment of the office of missing persons, the right to information act and national consultations on reconciliation mechanisms.

71. The Government co-sponsored Human Rights Council resolution 30/1 on promoting reconciliation, accountability and human rights in Sri Lanka[1] in October 2015 and committed Sir Lanka to a comprehensive approach to transitional justice

[1] See *Official Records of the General Assembly, Seventieth Session, Supplement No. 53A* (A/70/53/Add.1), chap. III.

and reconciliation. The Council resolution formed the basis for the peacebuilding priority plan developed in 2016, with support from the Department of Political Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. The plan, unique within the Peacebuilding Fund portfolio because it is designed as a broad Government-owned strategy under which the Fund is one of many donors, sets out overall peacebuilding priorities, including good governance, resettlement and durable solutions, reconciliation and transitional justice, with needs totalling more than $70 million, of which the Fund has contributed $7 million. At the Government's request, this comprehensive plan also serves as a donor coordination mechanism to which the European Union and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland have already contributed.

72. The priority plan investment follows earlier allocations in support of the return of displaced persons and the kick-starting of transitional justice through support for country-wide consultations with key stakeholders. Through the implementation of a $1.47 million project jointly implemented by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and UNICEF, more than 2,500 families have sustainably returned to their pre-conflict lands through a package ensuring that returnees have access to shelter, health, education and other essentials. Support for their return has increased levels of confidence in government, with no returns to former displacement centres. In the future, assistance will be scaled up to support new return processes while investment in livelihoods will deepen the sustainability of returns.

Yemen: peacebuilding support in the midst of crisis

73. Since the outbreak of war in early 2015, the major part of Peacebuilding Fund support to Yemen has been limited to specific peacebuilding efforts launched under the peacebuilding priority plan. In 2016, those efforts included the training of 66 non-governmental organizations in conflict-sensitive approaches to humanitarian action, early recovery and development, as well as continued human rights monitoring by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights.

74. In November 2016, the Peacebuilding Fund approved a new project to support mediation efforts by my Special Envoy for Yemen aimed at facilitating a political settlement to end the conflict and a return to an inclusive Yemeni-led transition. Moving forward, the Fund will explore additional ways to bolster essential services and capacities for peace in the midst of conflict.

IV. Project performance in 2016

75. Performance assessment in 2016 was based on a review of all projects active for more than three months, a total of 102 projects (see table 2). Scores were obtained through a consultative process, utilizing periodic reports of project implementers, Joint Steering Committee reports, evaluations and mission reports, as well as knowledge of Fund staff and United Nations partners. Projects deemed off track to deliver expected outputs received a score of 1, while those that were on track to deliver outputs rated a 2 and those that were on track *and* generated additional evidence of contributing to peacebuilding outcomes — a much higher bar — received a score of 3.

Table 2
Trend analysis of the global performance of the Peacebuilding Fund 2013-2016

Peacebuilding Fund priority area	*Total number of projects*	*On track to deliver agreed project outputs (percentage)*	*On track with supplemental evidence of a significant contribution to peacebuilding outcomes (percentage)*
Priority area 1			
1.1 Security sector reform	9	88.8	22.2
1.2 Rule of law	12	91.6	25.0
1.3 Disarmament, demobilization and reintegration	2	100.0	0.0
1.4 Political dialogue	12	91.6	41.6
Total 2016	**35**	**90.9**	**30.3**
Total 2015	**39**	**82.1**	**23.1**
Baseline 2013	21	85.7	38.1
Priority area 2			
2.1 Reconciliation	21	100.0	42.9
2.2 Democratic governance	8	87.5	62.5
2.3 Conflict prevention/management	12	83.2	41.8
Total 2016	**41**	**92.6**	**46.3**
Total 2015	**39**	**74.4**	**30.8**
Baseline 2013	28	82.1	32.1
Priority area 3			
3.1 Employment	2	100.0	0.0
3.2 Equitable access to social services	4	75.0	25.0
Total 2016	**6**	**83.3**	**16.7**
Total 2015	**9**	**88.9**	**0.0**
Baseline 2013	10	70.0	40.0
Priority area 4			
4.1 State capacities	3	100.0	0.0
4.2 Extension of state authority	4	50.0	0.0
4.3 Governance of peacebuilding resources	15	86.6	13.3
Total 2016	**22**	**85.0**	**10.0**
Total 2015	**22**	**90.9**	**36.4**

Peacebuilding Fund priority area	*Total number of projects*	*On track to deliver agreed project outputs (percentage)*	*On track with supplemental evidence of a significant contribution to peacebuilding outcomes (percentage)*
Baseline 2013	9	66.6	33.3
Overall 2016	**102**	**90.0**	**32.0**

Note: Scores based on Peacebuilding Support Office project assessments, periodic reports and independent country evaluations, December 2016.

76. By late 2016, 90 per cent of the Peacebuilding Fund's projects were on track to deliver peacebuilding results, marking an improvement for the third straight year in a row (there was an improvement from 78.6 per cent in 2014 to 81.7 per cent in 2015). Even more notable is the Fund's record of achievement based on actual evidence with respect to having contributed to a peacebuilding outcome, up from 26.6 per cent in 2015 to 32 per cent in 2016. A key factor driving these results has been the more mature portfolio compared with that of recent years. Multi-year programmatic investments in Guinea, Kyrgyzstan and Liberia, as well as a package of projects in Mali, all drew to a close in 2016, underscoring that peacebuilding results are most likely to be evident towards the end of the implementation cycle, after interventions have had an opportunity to trigger deeper changes in perception as well as in institutional and personal behaviour. A second factor is the Fund's guidance on improving results frameworks and a fourfold increase in evaluations of Fund investments, which have resulted in the provision of a more rigorous evidence base for programmatic oversight and lessons learned.

V. Peacebuilding Fund oversight and management

A. Advisory Group

77. The mandate of the fourth Advisory Group was extended to December 2017, in order to promote continuity in the support provided by the Group to the Peacebuilding Support Office during implementation of the joint General Assembly and Security Council resolutions on the review of the United Nations peacebuilding architecture, and amid ongoing efforts to replenish the Peacebuilding Fund.

78. The Advisory Group expressed its concern regarding the financial condition of the Peacebuilding Fund in a letter addressed to my predecessor in February 2016. While the September pledging conference sought to address the funding challenge, the Group and I will work together in 2017 to identify additional measures needed to ensure adequate and predictable financing.

79. Substantively, in its two meetings in 2016, the Advisory Group advised the Peacebuilding Fund on the implications of operationalizing "sustaining peace", reviewed options for increasing funding for peacebuilding and advised on the Fund's next Business Plan. Members of the Group, as dictated by its terms of reference, conducted monitoring or scoping visits to Guatemala, Kyrgyzstan, Mali,

Papua New Guinea and Tunisia (for Libya). The Group expressed its appreciation for the strides made by the Fund in terms of efficiency and transparency and stressed the importance of embedding strategic communications in the upcoming Business Plan so as to ensure a better communication of results.

B. Budget and personnel

80. The budget for managing the Peacebuilding Fund is derived from 3 per cent of donor contributions, which, in 2016, amounted to $53.5 million, yielding additional overhead income of about $1.6 million. The 2016 cost plan was $2,681,196, approximately 8.6 per cent higher than in 2015, most of which was allocated to direct staff and other personnel costs (70 per cent) covering 12 fixed-term and temporary posts, operating and other direct costs (13 per cent), mission travel of staff and the Advisory Group (10 per cent) and programme support costs (7 per cent). The Fund continued to maximize available income through a range of cost mitigation measures, including economy class travel and utilization of staff secondments from UNHCR and donor partners including Australia, Japan and Switzerland. In addition, the Fund leveraged its partnerships with Interpeace and PeaceNexus to complement its support of programming in six countries.

C. Enhanced monitoring and evaluation

81. The results of the Peacebuilding Fund's investments in monitoring and evaluation since 2014 were evident in 2016, with substantial increases in both the quality and quantity of the monitoring and evaluation of Fund initiatives.

82. The bedrock of the Peacebuilding Fund's enhanced approach is the rigorous monitoring of results. Perception surveys were launched in Côte d'Ivoire, Kyrgyzstan, Liberia, the Niger and Papua New Guinea in both target and control group communities to enable the measurement of impact. Community-based monitoring schemes, which increase the transparency and accountability of the Peacebuilding Fund and government partners in respect of their engagement with citizens, were initiated in Côte d'Ivoire, Mali, the Niger and Papua New Guinea. In each location, the Fund is piloting a different approach, including work carried out through national statistical offices, non-governmental organizations and commercial enterprises. The comparative advantages of these variations will be analysed throughout 2017.

83. The Peacebuilding Fund's first-ever evaluability assessment, which analyses project design and the robustness of monitoring frameworks, was conducted in Papua New Guinea in April 2016, enabling early course correction and stronger evaluation at programme's end. Final evaluations were commissioned in 23 projects or programmes in 2016, a nearly fivefold increase over 2015.

84. In 2016, Peacebuilding Fund staff conducted 31 technical support missions, representing a sixfold increase over 2015, to assist in strategy, design or implementation of programming in Burkina Faso, Cameroon, the Central African Republic, Chad, Colombia, Côte d'Ivoire, Guatemala, Guinea-Bissau, Kyrgyzstan, Liberia, Libya, Mali, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Somalia, Sri Lanka and

Tajikistan. These missions were complemented by support provided by Fund partners, the PeaceNexus Foundation and Interpeace to Burkina Faso, the Central African Republic, Guinea-Bissau, Mali, the Niger and South Sudan.

VI. Conclusion

85. The agenda for sustaining peace compels a redoubling of effort on the part not only of the Peacebuilding Fund, so as to ensure that its resources are used to greatest effect, but also of Member States, to ensure that they match their clear-cut political support of the Fund with adequate and sustainable financing. As the Fund moves into its next decade of support for countries in their effort to sustain peace, its new Business Plan will commit the Fund to a further tightening of its management practices and a sharpening of its focus on those needs that are traditionally underserved or unmet by donors that are less risk-tolerant. Whether it is able to act on a scale that keeps pace with demand will depend on its near-term ability to attract sufficient resources. Critical to resource mobilization will be the Fund's improvement of the means by which it contributes to knowledge on sustaining peace, gained through its enhanced monitoring and evaluation investments, and its prioritization of strategic communication, so as to increase transparency and facilitate engagement in the global conversation on what works best with respect to supporting countries in crisis.

United Nations A/71/[illegible]

General Assembly

Distr.: General
14 February 2017
English
Original: Russian

Seventy-first session
Agenda items 31 and 84

Prevention of armed conflict

The rule of law at the national and international levels

Note verbale dated 8 February 2017 from the Permanent Mission of the Russian Federation to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

The Permanent Mission of the Russian Federation to the United Nations presents its compliments to the Secretary-General of the United Nations and has the honour to state its position on General Assembly resolution 71/248, a non-consensus resolution concerning the so-called "mechanism to assist in the investigation and prosecution of persons responsible for the most serious crimes under international law committed in the Syrian Arab Republic since March 2011", as well as the report on the implementation of the resolution (A/71/755).

A number of powers vested in the "mechanism" under resolution 71/248, including those of "analys[ing] evidence" and "prepar[ing] files", are prosecutorial in nature. However, prosecutions, criminal investigations and support of criminal investigations are not among the functions of the General Assembly. It cannot create an organ that has more powers than the Assembly itself.

In deciding to create a "mechanism" with these functions, the General Assembly acted *ultra vires* — going beyond its powers as specified in Articles 10-12 and 22 of the Charter of the United Nations, and also in violation of the Charter provisions on the division of powers between the principal organs of the United Nations.

The General Assembly has never created such mechanisms by its decisions. On some occasions, it has authorized the Secretary-General to conduct relevant negotiations with an interested State, with the prior consent of that State being a key element in such cases. Mechanisms with investigative functions or the ability to assist criminal investigations have been created only by the Security Council, which is consistent with its primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security.

The establishment of such a "mechanism" without the express consent of the Syrian Arab Republic or a Security Council resolution adopted under Chapter VII of

the Charter is a grave violation of the principles of the sovereign equality of all Members of the Organization and non-intervention in their internal affairs, enshrined in Article 2 of the Charter. Clearly, General Assembly resolution 71/248 was adopted without the consent of the Syrian Arab Republic. Moreover, the resolution was drafted against its will (as expressed in its vote against the resolution and in its statements in explanation of vote).

The absence in resolution 71/248 of any reference to the basic principle of the consent of the State concerned does not abrogate that principle. Its firm and established position in the practice of the Organization ensures its enduring validity and full applicability.

After the adoption of General Assembly resolution 71/248, the Secretariat developed terms of reference for the "mechanism" (A/71/755). This document raises a number of additional issues, because it vests the "mechanism" with even broader powers.

Paragraphs 31 and 32 of the report refer explicitly to the "quasi-prosecutorial function" of the "mechanism". The report includes new powers not envisaged in resolution 71/248, including the possibility of "establish[ing] the connection between crime-based evidence and the persons responsible ... for such alleged crimes", focusing on evidence pertaining to mens rea and to specific modes of criminal liability. Similarly, paragraphs 13-19 of the report permit the "mechanism" to conduct a preliminary assessment of the sufficiency of the evidence and prepare files focusing on the criminal conduct of the persons responsible for the crimes, without any distinction based on their affiliation or official capacity. Such powers clearly go beyond standard fact-finding procedures and are more appropriate for prosecutorial or investigative bodies (national or international).

As resolution 71/248 clearly runs counter to the Charter of the United Nations, the proposed "mechanism" cannot be considered "a subsidiary body established by the General Assembly", as stated in paragraph 38 of the report, nor can it have any legal standing; this "mechanism" cannot enjoy privileges and immunities under the Convention on the Privileges and Immunities of the United Nations (paragraph 38), nor can it possess the legal capacity to conclude agreements with States and other entities (paragraphs 18 and 37). For these same reasons, no "head" or "deputy head" of the "mechanism" can be appointed, nor can a secretariat of the "mechanism" be formed, nor can voluntary contributions be accepted to support the establishment and operation of the "mechanism". Voluntary contributions may be used within the Organization solely in order to advance the objectives of its Charter.

The report is marked by other legal flaws as well, including, inter alia, paragraph 21, (which vests the "mechanism" with the power to deny a State access to information on the basis of the "mechanism's" perception that such State does not respect international human rights law and standards). While it covers a number of issues in detail, this document contains no provisions on procedural requirements and guarantees, stating only that the matter will be covered in the rules of procedure adopted by the "mechanism" itself.

Accordingly, any information or evidence "collected, consolidated, preserved and analysed" by this "mechanism" may not be used for purposes of any potential criminal proceeding (either national or international). Should this "mechanism" be

established despite the legally untenable decisions and measures already taken, the Russian Federation sees no possibility of cooperating with it. We call on other States to take the same position.

The Permanent Mission of the Russian Federation to the United Nations would be grateful if the present note verbale could be circulated as a General Assembly document, under agenda items 31 and 84.

United Nations A/71/794–S/2017/135

General Assembly
Security Council

Distr.: General
17 February 2017

Original: English

General Assembly
Seventy-first session
Agenda item 41
Question of Cyprus

Security Council
Seventy-second year

Letter dated 14 February 2017 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Turkey to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit herewith a letter dated 14 February 2017, addressed to you by Mehmet Dânâ, Representative of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (see annex).

I would be grateful if the text of the present letter and its annex could be circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 41, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Güven **Begeç**
Deputy Permanent Representative
Chargé d'affaires a.i.

17-02619 (E) 220217

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Annex to the letter dated 14 February 2017 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Turkey to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to enclose herewith a copy of the letter dated 14 February 2017 addressed to you by Mustafa Akıncı, President of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (see enclosure).

I should be grateful if you would have the text of the present letter and its enclosure circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 41, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Mehmet **Dânâ**
Representative

Enclosure

I am writing to draw your kind attention to a recent decision of the Greek Cypriot parliament to include in the dates commemorated by the schools in the South the so-called referendum held by Greek Cypriots in 1950 for union with Greece (*Enosis*). The decision, if not revoked, will deal a serious blow to the efforts to build confidence between the two sides in Cyprus and thus will considerably undermine the current negotiating process aimed at a comprehensive settlement.

As you are well aware, the Greek Cypriot goal of *Enosis* was the main reason which led to the Cyprus problem in the first place and to the suffering and pain on our island. The 1960 International Cyprus Treaties also expressly prohibited *Enosis*. I am sure that you are as astonished as I am to learn that after 67 years, this issue is now being brought up by a far-right extremist political party, ELAM, and supported by the majority in the House of Representatives in the South. It is indeed more regrettable that Mr. Anastasiades's party, DISY, contributed to this decision.

This decision has dealt a serious blow to our process at a time when the negotiations are at a very critical stage and we have decided to continue to the Cyprus Conference in March. The education of youth and the promotion of a peace culture are of paramount importance if we are to live in a united federal Cyprus. With this aim, we established a bicommunal technical committee on education as a confidence-building measure. Instead of fulfilling this responsibility, the current decision, which targets students of secondary education, will only plant seeds of division in the minds of the next generation and render all mutually agreed confidence-building measures meaningless. This is also naturally not in line with your calls and that of the Security Council for the two sides to take steps that will help build confidence on the island and prepare our respective communities for a settlement.

This decision, coupled by racially motivated attacks against Turkish Cypriots who cross to the South, has furthermore reinforced the security concerns of Turkish Cypriots and highlighted the need for a mechanism to deter such tendencies within the context of a settlement.

Aware of the risks that the year 2017 carries for the settlement efforts, I believe it is of the utmost importance that all the relevant parties refrain from taking such steps and making our already complicated task of achieving a viable and durable settlement all the more difficult. It is not a secret that the Turkish Cypriot side is waiting for the Greek Cypriot side to take steps so that a bizonal, bicommunal federation with the effective participation of the two sides can be ensured and sustained. The important decisions that we have to take during these critical weeks will play a decisive role in shaping the future of our island and that of the next generations. In this regard, I kindly urge you to use your best efforts to remind my counterpart, Mr. Anastasiades, that the above-mentioned decision of the Greek Cypriot parliament clearly contradicts the letter and the spirit of all the relevant United Nations documents on Cyprus, as well as the Joint Declaration of 11 February 2014, and to encourage him to show leadership for its repeal.

(*Signed*) Mustafa **Akıncı**
President

United Nations A/71/795–S/2017/140

General Assembly
Security Council

Distr.: General
17 February 2017

Original: English

General Assembly
Seventy-first session
Agenda items 32 and 37

Protracted conflicts in the GUAM area and their implications for international peace, security and development

The situation in the occupied territories of Azerbaijan

Security Council
Seventy-second year

Letter dated 15 February 2017 from the Permanent Representative of Azerbaijan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

In accordance with instructions received from my Government, I have the honour to transmit herewith the statement of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan dated 14 February 2017 regarding the illegal "referendum" in the occupied territories of the Republic of Azerbaijan (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda items 32 and 37, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Yashar **Aliyev**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

17-02615 (E) 210217

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Annex to the letter dated 15 February 2017 from the Permanent Representative of Azerbaijan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Statement of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan on illegal "referendum" in the occupied territories of Azerbaijan

14 February 2017

According to the press reports, on 20 February 2017, Armenia plans to conduct a so-called "referendum on constitutional changes" in the puppet illegal regime it has established in the temporarily occupied territories of Azerbaijan.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan reiterates that the illegal regime established by Armenia in the temporarily occupied territories of Azerbaijan is ultimately nothing other than the product of aggression and occupation. It is under Armenia's direction and control and survives by virtue of its military, political, financial and other support, as was confirmed by the European Court of Human Rights in its judgment of 16 June 2015 on the case of *Chiragov and others v. Armenia*.

This provocative step, as well as Armenia's attempts to change the name of the integral Nagorno-Karabakh region of Azerbaijan, is yet another clear manifestation that Armenia is not genuinely interested in seeking a political settlement of the armed conflict. Instead, Armenia pursues the path of escalation, undertakes consistent measures to consolidate the results of its occupation policy and to maintain the unacceptable and unsustainable status quo, undermines efforts for the peaceful resolution of the conflict through substantive talks, illegally changes the demographic, cultural and physical character of the occupied territories and engages in economic and other activities, including the transfer of the Armenian population into these territories, with the ultimate goal of imposing a fait accompli situation. By such actions, Armenia also undermines and puts in jeopardy regional and international peace and security.

The principled basis for the settlement of the conflict is laid down in Security Council resolutions 822 (1993), 853 (1993), 874 (1993) and 884 (1993) and General Assembly resolution 62/243 of 2008, which condemn the use of force against Azerbaijan and occupation of its territories and reaffirm the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Azerbaijan and the inviolability of its internationally recognized borders. In those resolutions, the Security Council reaffirmed that the Nagorno-Karabakh region is an inalienable part of Azerbaijan and demanded the immediate, complete and unconditional withdrawal of the occupying forces from all occupied territories of Azerbaijan.

The illegal "referendum" constitutes a clear violation of the Constitution of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the norms and principles of international law, and therefore has no legal effect whatsoever. This so-called "referendum" is also being conducted in the seized lands under the situation created through the use of force and threat of force against the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan by Armenia and

accompanied by the notorious practice of ethnic cleansing and other flagrant violations of the norms and principles of international law.

We call upon the international community to reject this fabricated illegal "referendum" exercise and to exert political and diplomatic pressure on Armenia to drop its futile attempts to mislead its own people and the wider international community, cease its policy of occupation and annexation, engage constructively in the conflict settlement process and comply with its international obligations.

United Nations A/71/796–S/2017/139

General Assembly
Security Council

Distr.: General
17 February 2017

Original: English

General Assembly
Seventy-first session
Agenda item 61
Peacebuilding and sustaining peace

Security Council
Seventy-second year

Letter dated 15 February 2017 from the Permanent Representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to enclose herewith an answer given by a spokesperson for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea on 15 February 2017 with regard to the surface-to-surface medium- to long-range strategic ballistic missile test-fire by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 61, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) **Ja** Song Nam
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

17-02596 (E) 210217

Please recycle

Annex to the letter dated 15 February 2017 from the Permanent Representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Answer given by a spokesperson for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea on 15 February 2017 to a question raised by the Korean Central News Agency with regard to the fact that the United States and its vassal forces faulted the surface-to-surface medium- to long-range strategic ballistic missile test-fire by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea

The United Nations Security Council issued a press statement under the manipulation of the United States on 13 February 2017, in which it faulted the test-fire by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) as a "breach of resolution" and threatened that it would take "additional crucial measures".

The recent missile test-fire conducted by the DPRK is part of the normal course which it has to go through in implementing the line of simultaneous development of the two fronts, its State line.

Respected Supreme Leader Kim Jong Un, in his New Year Address for this year, declared that the preparations for the intercontinental ballistic rocket test-fire had reached the final phase, and, in the subsequent period, the DPRK officially clarified more than once that the measure for further bolstering its nuclear force can be taken any moment the Supreme Leader makes his decision.

The self-defensive measure is for firmly protecting the sovereignty of the country and the right to existence of the nation from the threat of nuclear war posed by the United States and its vassal forces and for reliably guaranteeing peace on the Korean peninsula and the security of the region.

No one is entitled to fault this legitimate right of a sovereign State.

The Security Council has long been disqualified to take issue with the DPRK's legitimate step for self-defence as it has gone to the extremes in its application of double standards, by which it labels the tests carried out by the DPRK for self-defence "illegal" but keeps mum about the tests conducted by the United States and other countries.

For United Nations Member States or the United Nations Secretary-General to blindly follow the Security Council resolution, failing to discern its absurd double-dealing attitude, means that they do not properly perform their duties.

There is no paragraph in the Charter of the United Nations which specifies nuclear tests and missile test-fires as illegal. Therefore, the DPRK will never acknowledge the Security Council "resolution" which termed the DPRK's nuclear test and rocket test-fire "illegal" and will never do so in the future either.

We categorically reject the press statement of the Security Council which took issue with the right of a sovereign State to self-defence under the high-handed pressure of the United States, in utter disregard of the DPRK's just demand.